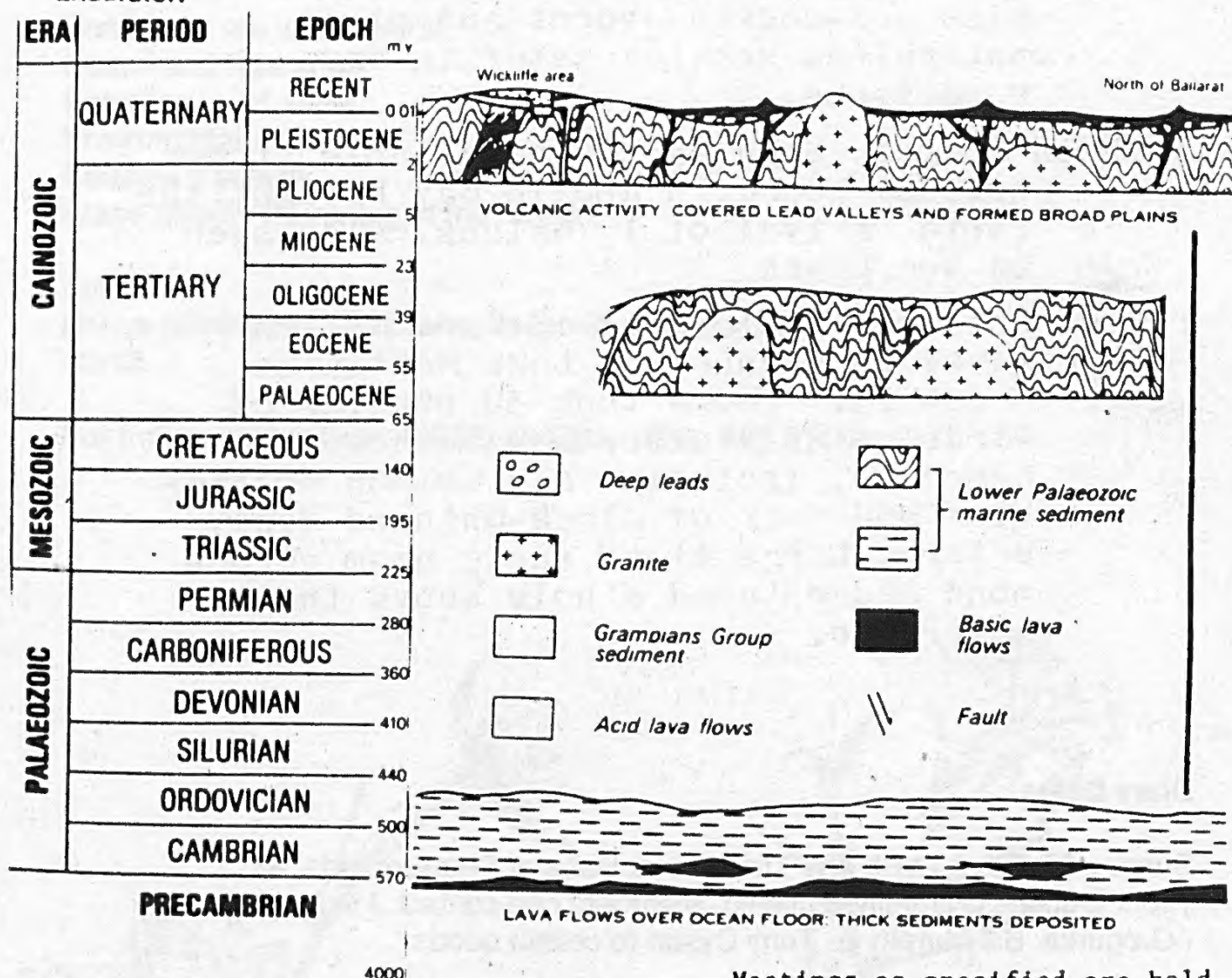


# Field Naturalists Club of Ballarat *Incorporated*

MAY 1994

## EXCURSION - NEWS SHEET

- Meeting May 6 Geology of Ballarat - Dr R Ramsay  
Meeting June 3 Lizards and snakes of the Ballarat area  
DCNR Officer  
Excursion May 8 Geology of Ballarat - Dr R Ramsay  
Excursion June 5 Woody Yallock/Mt Erip - Greg Binns



President: Mr J Gregurke Ph:  
Secretary: Mrs M Rotheram  
Treasurer: Mr G Binns  
Editor: Mr A Dyson

Meetings as specified are held at the School of Mines and Industries, Lydiard Street Sth, Art Building, commencing at 7.30 p.m. EXCURSIONS, AS SPECIFIED, COMMENCE FROM BOOK CITY, cnr STURT AND ARMSTRONG STS, BALLARAT at 9.30 a.m. for FULL DAY OUTING. OR at 1.30 p.m. for HALF DAY.

## Field Reports: April Meeting

Ken McDonnell: Flock of about 25 Cape Barren Geese on Lake Martin near Cressy, about a fortnight previously. About 100 black swans with ducks and other waterfowl on Moorabool Reservoir.

Carol Hall: Two spotted turtledoves with three young in garden.

Florence Williamson: Koala in her garden in Ligar Street.

John Gregurke: 14 Pelicans on ponds on sewage treatment effluent west of Horsham, also Red-necked Avocet and other waterbirds seeking water in dry conditions.

Elizabeth Stayt: Seed on the bird-table at her holiday house in Apollo Bay brought the rapid arrival of 15 Galahs, also seen on the beach.

Margaret Rotheram: Flock of 18 Cape Barren Geese on channel at Lake Martin on March 13. More than 30 species of birds at Beckworth waterhole on March 22, including six Common Bronze-wing and pair of Black-Chinned Honey-eaters. Large tiger snake swam across pond and entered a hole above the waterline.

## **Diary Dates**

Sunday 22 May. Trash and Treasure at Ballarat Showgrounds. All contributions gratefully received. Members can contact John Gregurke, Bill Murphy or Tony Dyson to collect goods.

Sat Sep 17 - Sun 18 - Angair Inc. 1994 Wildflower show.

Wednesday 25 May 7.30pm - Committee meeting at McDonnell's

## ANGAIR WILDFLOWER & ART SHOW

Anglesea Hall McMillan Street, Anglesea

Sat Sep 17 10am to 5.30pm

Sun Sep 18 10am to 5pm

Adults \$4 Pensioners and students \$2

Children 12 and under free

Admission price includes:

Local wildflower display

Display of Australian native garden flowers

Terrestrial orchid presentation

Nature walk

Bus trip to see wildflowers

Sound and light show

Entrance to art show

Environmental displays

Children's activity

Stage display ("Evening in the forest")

For sale:

Native plants, arts and crafts, environmental books,  
cards...

For further information -



## Tropical Queensland

Dr Frank Harrap

Frank travelled to Queensland in March, and later in June and July of 1992. His talk and slide presentation on the 8th April gave us a taste of the fauna and flora of the areas he visited.

From Kuranda we saw slides of the Superb Fruit-Dove (the Purple-crowned Pigeon) and the Rufous Owl. This owl is strong enough to kill a scrub turkey. The cassowary was first recorded in PNG and in Malaysia in 1780. Our three largest birds are the ostrich, emu and the cassowary - the cassowary at up to 2 metres being smaller than the other two. It feeds on about 100 different fruits, excretes the seeds and consequently helps greatly in the regeneration of the rainforest. The male cassowary incubates the eggs (3 to 4 eggs are laid on the ground) and stays with the young for 9 months. During the devastating times after the 1986 cyclones at Darwin cassowaries were fed by hand due to the loss of the forest canopy.

Frank showed slides of the Josephine Falls and Mount Bartle Frere in the Bellenden Ker National Park. This park is between the Atherton Tableland and the coastal plain with high rugged granitic range of mountains of the same name. Mount Bartle Frere is the highest peak at 1612 m.

One of the highlights was a boat trip through the mangroves at Cairns. We saw pictures of the male Darter, the Great-billed Heron and the White-breasted Sea Eagle.

At Centennial Gardens (saltwater one side and fresh water the other) there were Magpie Geese and the Torresian Imperial-Pigeon (mainly white with striking black markings on the outer wing and the tip of the tail). The brown feathered immature Jabiru (Black-necked Stork) which is confined to WA, Queensland and the NT.

At Mt Whitfield Frank saw the Dollarbird with the significant white wing patch. Flycatchers (both the Pied and Satin) and the Papuan Frogmouth which is the largest in Australia and related to the Nightjars. The Yellow-bellied Sunbird with its untidy nest - the nest is a long pendant made of grass, bark, leaves and feathers bound with cobwebs and suspended from branches.

The Atherton Tableland is a relatively flat to undulating region of rich volcanic soils lying 700 to 800 m. above sea level. Numerous land form features are reminders of the volcanic origin. Lake Eachum is a circular blue crystal clear crater lake.

Lantana is spreading on areas of cleared ground. Lantana is a native of South America and being adaptable to most soils and conditions has thrived here.



Some of the birds Frank photographed in the tablelands area - many Robins ( White-browed, Pale-yellow and the Grey-headed), Eastern Whipbird Lewin's Honeyeater, the mound building Scrub Turkey, the Brown Cuckoo-Dove with the long tail, the Yellow-throated Scrub Wren and the White-headed Pigeon.

Frank showed slides of the Bowerbird taken at Mount Lewis. It takes up to 4 years to build a bower good enough to attract the female. The attractive Boatbill - the small yellow-breasted flycatcher with the enormous flat bill. The winter migrant - the Brolga and the Sarus Crane. The Brolga has a heavy dewlap and red adornment confined to the head. The Sarus Crane has less dewlap and the red extends down the neck.

Other waterbirds shown (at Cairns and Kuranda) were - Kingfishers, the Hoary-headed Grebe and the White-browed Crake.

DOLLARBIRD



RUFOUS





DIPROTODONTA: BURRAMYIDAE

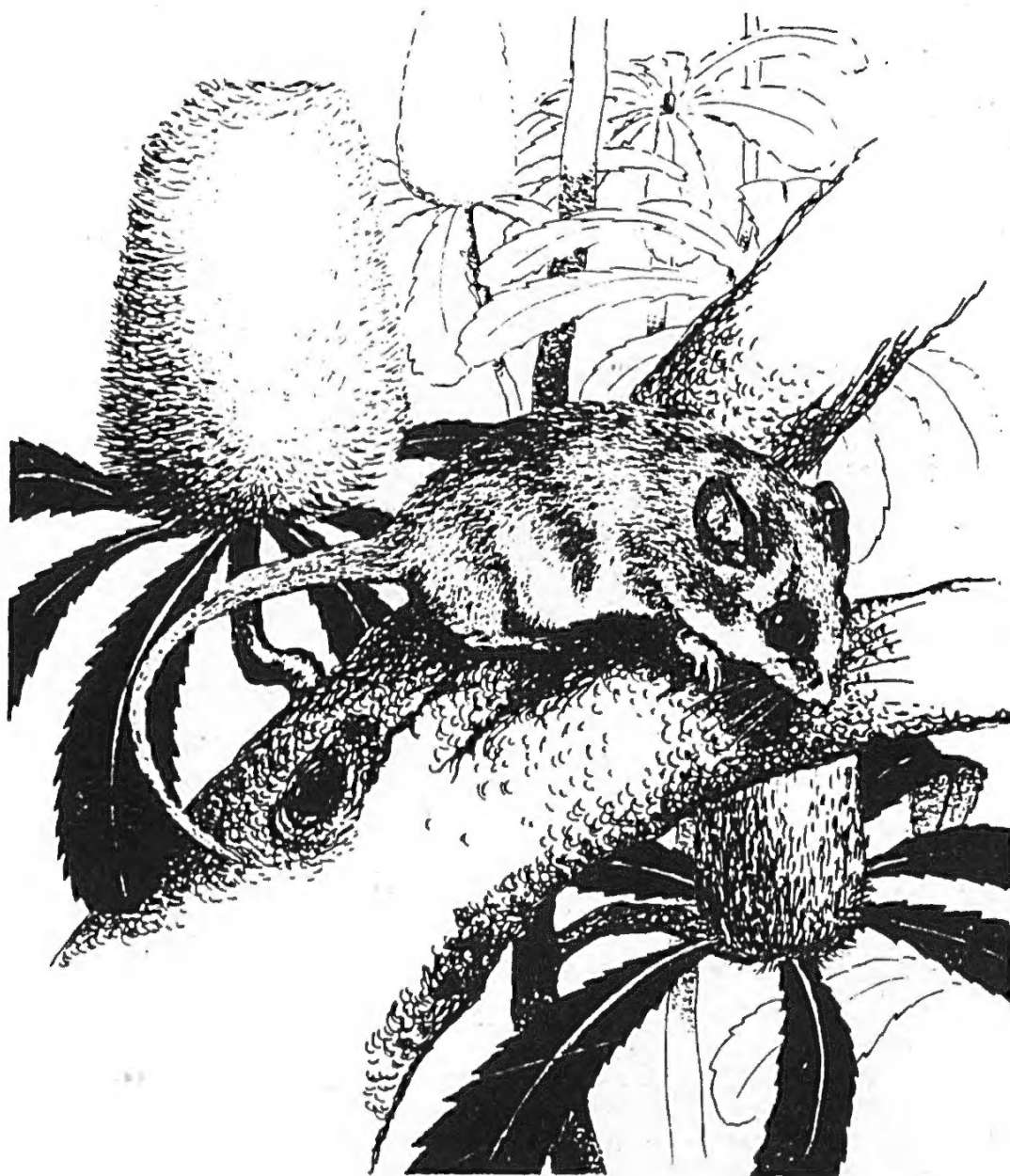


Plate 31 Eastern Pygmy Possum

(See p. 8.)



## The Eastern Pygmy Possum.

*Cercatetus nanus*,Order Diprotodonta, Superfamily Phalangaroida,  
Family Burramyidae.

Once thought to be principally insectivorous the Eastern Pygmy Possum is now known to feed largely on nectar and pollen which it gathers from Banksias, Eucalypts and bottlebrush plants which it gathers with a brush tipped tongue.

It is not destructive to flowers and may play a part in pollinisation, when pollen is abundant it may supply it with all its protein requirements, when flowers are unavailable, it may eat soft fruits, insects are consumed throughout the year and may be important in their diet when inhabiting wet forests. Captive animals readily eat spiders, mantis, termites, grasshoppers, beetles and beetle larvae. Flying moths are caught and the wings are bitten off and the body eaten. Eating occurs in short bursts followed by elaborate grooming.

It is found in wet sclerophyll forests to tree heaths, banksias and myrtaceous shrubs are favoured food sources and nesting sites in drier areas. Its small size enables it to nest in very small hollows, between old bark and wood of eucalypts, abandoned birds nests and forks of trees. In very small hollows, a spherical nest about 6cm is made of short shredded bark.

It appears to be solitary and moves from nest to nest. Males tend to move further, one was observed to move 125 metres in one night.

It is generally nocturnal being active a few hours after dusk, activity is reduced in winter where much time is spent in torpor, curled up tightly its temperature is that of the surrounding area. Before winter, it will be noticed that it builds a fat reserve and increases in weight the tail is noticeably thicker.

To be continued.

Elfin.